



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ, partners offer pre-storm preparation guidelines**

As Hurricane Ida moves toward landfall, the Department of Environmental Quality is reminding people that may be affected by the storm to take precautions to protect the environment.

#### **Debris Management Plan**

In 2006 DEQ developed the first Debris Management Plan, which served as a comprehensive model for addressing how to collect and dispose of waste and debris in the wake of a disaster. The current version of the plan documents some of the lessons learned from prior disasters and uses those lessons to formulate a strategy that manages future disasters in an organized, efficient manner, while ensuring protection of public health and the environment.

The Debris Management Plan is available at [www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

#### **Report spills to the National Response Center**

DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are reminding business and industry owners to report spills to the National Response Center (NRC). The Center is integral to these facilities' long-established procedures in response to natural disasters such as Gustav.

The NRC serves as the sole point of contact for reporting all oil, chemical, radiological and biological releases in the United States. Industries, businesses and residents that encounter spills or discharges in the hurricane's aftermath should contact the Center immediately at (800) 424-8802 or (202) 267-2675.

#### **Water treatment facility should be prepared**

Here are some hurricane preparedness tips with regard to safekeeping of water treatment facilities:

- Review your emergency response plan and make sure it and contacts are current.
- Establish clear lines of communication with local police and fire department. Request that local law enforcement check on any staff remaining on site. If communication channels are down, this check needs to continue on a routine basis until communication channels are reestablished.
- Stock up on supplies, non-perishable food, water, batteries and flashlights. Charge all wireless communication devices and check all normal and emergency communication equipment.
- Inspect and test water system source and treatment facility for security, backup lights, generators, backup pumps, controls, feeders, motors and availability of spare parts.
- Notify the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality if wastewater plants are taken off-line or Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals if drinking water plants are taken off-line.
- Have sufficient supplies of sand bags available, board all windows and doors and ensure that emergency electrical generators are not located in flood-prone areas of the facility. Obtain extra fuel for generators. Identify and schedule emergency operations and cleanup crews. This could consist of heavy equipment and extra personnel to assist in clean-ups after the storm.

- Notify state and federal agencies of location and telephone numbers of the emergency personnel. For public water systems, be sure to line up contacts to request emergency water supply, if necessary.
- Establish contacts to request emergency water supply, if necessary. This may include trucking in water from another potable water supply. Make arrangements with the local power utility to be prepared to restore power to the water system as a priority customer. Arrange to have materials and chemicals delivered to your site as soon as it is operationally safe.
- Prepare customers for possible boil water advisory status. Have a “Boil Water Notice” prepared, including multilingual; have emergency disinfection of drinking water procedures prepared for customers; and have “shelter-in-place” guidelines ready in case of release of hazardous materials.
- Establish alternative transportation strategies for rotating in core employees to the facility if high water prevents travel. Personnel should bring an emergency kit with them, which contains change of clothes, sleeping bag, flashlights, extra batteries, medication and other essentials. Ensure vehicles are fueled, serviceable and parked in a safe location.

Refer to the list of preparation measures online at: [www.epa.gov/safewater/hurricane/pre-hurricane.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/hurricane/pre-hurricane.html)

## **Secure drums**

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, DEQ and its state, local and federal partners recovered more than six million orphaned drums. These drums ranged in a variety of sizes and contained all kinds of product, some of which could have been damaging to human health or the environment. Many of these containers would not have been of concern had they been properly secured before the storms hit.

Proper emergency procedures instituted before the storms may have significantly reduced releases from storage tanks and other types of containers.

Pre-storm preparations for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike led to a significant decrease in the number of orphaned drums.

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